The Oztent RV is truly an amazing tent. It's fast, strong and versatile in how it can be set up, which comes in very handy for the outback tourer.
I've had my Oztent RV3, with peaked side panels, front panel and fly, for two years now and have come across a few things that help me get the best out of my tent.

1. Setting up the Oztent

I've heard a few stories about Oztent frames breaking in strong winds. I have had my tent in conditions where tree branches were falling down around us and we had 30ml of rain in 30 minutes. My tent performed brilliantly even with a couple of pegs being pulled out. I am a strong believer that the key to having a tent survive severe weather has got more to do with set up than the quality of the tent itself.
If an Oztent frame is going to break, usually at the hinges, it happens often during the setup process in windy conditions. Whilst the tent can stand up on its own, make sure it's pegged out before attempting to put the main section up. If it's windy, wait for the wind to die down before putting the tent up. However, if you need to put it up in the wind, face the back of the tent towards the wind. And, if possible, get someone to help you put the mainframe into position.
Whatever you do, don't allow the tent to twist in any direction other than what it is designed to do. This is when the plastic hinges are likely to break.

2. Use the guy ropes

The only way that the Oztent frame can break is if it's allowed to twist around in directions it's not designed to bend in. In windy conditions, all of the guy ropes need to be put out and pegged incorrectly.
The pegs will then hold tight and if correctly done, the direction of the guy ropes will ensure that they will not allow the tent to twist and bend in the wind.



The guys are there to be used. So use 'em.

3. Put a ground sheet down

Even though the floor of the tent is very strong and completely waterproof, it's a great idea to put an Oztent mesh floor saver, groundsheet, or tarp under the tent to protect it from sharp sticks and rocks. You would much rather puncture a $20 tarp than a $1000 tent. Make sure that the tarp does not stick out past the edges of the tent because if it rains, the water may run between the tarp and the tent floor. If you have any small holes in the floor you will quickly find out where they are!
We recently wrote a blog on the benefits of a groundsheet – which you can check our for more information.

4. Add the fly

Oztent offer a fly for all RV tents. It's made from polyester and simply zips onto the top to cover the main part of the tent. It's very easy to use and can remain on the tent permanently if you want. The fly is not essential as the tent is completely waterproof without it. However, if you're going into frosty conditions, you may experience a large amount of condensation forming on the ceiling of the tent. So for this reason, the fly can come in very handy.
By attaching the fly, you change the tent from a single skin to a dual-layered tent. This means that most of the condensation will form on the underside of the fly rather than the tent roof.

The first time I used our tent in the Flinders Rangers, we had a lot of frosts in the morning. The entire roof of the tent was frozen and when the sun came out, we had to pack our bed up as it felt like it was raining inside the tent. After purchasing the fly, we again went to the Flinders in similar conditions. We still had a little condensation in the tent but most of it was on the fly which we were able to remove and put into the sun to dry whilst we packed down our camp.
With the addition of the fly, the tent perform better in cold areas, and makes the tent even more waterproof in the rain. It also gives you seven more tie-down points for holding the tent secure in windy conditions.



This is what the Oztent fly looks like on an RV tent.

5. Attach the ridge poles

If you purchase the peaked side panels or front panel, you will be supplied with a ridge pole for each. The ridge pole for the peaked side panels goes on top of the tall awning poles. The ridge pole for the front panel goes on top of the front awning poles
We found that these ridge poles were very useful in keeping the awning tight. Therefore, we made sure that we packed both ridge poles in with the peaked side panels and used the front ridge pole even when we weren't using the front panel.
Make sure you put the ridge pole between the awning pole and the awning with the guy ropes on top of everything. I've made the mistake of putting the ridge pole on last and paid the price when it blew off and hit my car in windy conditions.

A few more tips for using your tent in stormy weather:

We've already talked about putting the tent up correctly, but there are a few other things you can do to give it a fighting chance in stormy conditions.

1. Firstly, when setting the tent up try to **pick the most sheltered spot available**. The tent is very strong but you're really not doing yourself any favours if you choose to test its limitations.
2. As well as facing the back of the tent to the wind, **position your vehicle to block as much wind as possible** from the tent.
3. If you've enclosed the awning using the side panels and front panel, **dig a channel for the water to run around the awning part of the tent**. There is no sealed bucket floor in this part of the tent. You may find that whilst you're nice and dry inside your enclosed annexe, the water can come rushing in under the panels making your room rather muddy!

I have really enjoyed using my Oztent and have found it to be a very strong and practical tent. It is versatile and robust enough for almost any situation found whilst camping.
The above tips are a few things I have found that help me to get the best out my Oztent. If you have any other tips or ideas for using an Oztent, feel free to let us know.

Have a look at our Oztent 30 Second Tents to put my tips to the test!